WHIRRAKEE

July 2004 Vol. 25 No. 6

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.
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Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single $34; Family $40; Concession: Single $28.50; Family $34. *Whirrakee* subscription only is $34.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square. The invited speaker at general meetings starts at 8:00pm and meetings conclude with supper.
If a workshop is held prior to the meeting, it will be advertised and it usually starts at 7.00pm.
The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearer listed above and the following members: Rob Moors (ex officio), Lyn Hamilton, Maurie Lewis, Glenise Moors, Bob Ruddick, and there are 4 vacancies.

Excursions Excursions are conducted irregularly and are advertised on the diary page of the *Whirrakee*. The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, unless otherwise specified. In addition to local excursions, campouts are held several times each year, usually coinciding with long weekends or holiday periods.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club has one active group that meets regularly (the Fauna Study Group) and other groups that meet at irregular intervals.

Fauna Study Group: meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm in the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building.

Chairman: John Burtonclay, Fadersons Lane, Mandurang (5439 5710)
Secretary: Bill Holsworth, 13 Nabilla Crs., Bendigo (5443 4063)
Equipment Officer: Maurie Lewis (0407 427179)

Bird Observers Group: This group has field excursions and the occasional lecture evening. Please consult the *Whirrakee* for details. Special bird observations should be reported to Anne Bridley 5449 3479.
To propose meetings or excursions please contact Kerrie Norris 5447 8017.

Front Cover: **Photographer Rod Orr**

Moorabee Bluff - showing the (Wilkinson) Interglacial Pavement sloping down towards the (imaginary) water. To have this intriguing description explained further, please see Rod Orr's article on page 6.

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club

Vol. 25, No.6, July 2004

Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*) which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

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Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles.
Contributions will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although articles received more than one week after the monthly General Meeting will probably be too late for inclusion in the next issue of *Whirrakee*.
Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced, but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, and acknowledgment should be given to the author and the Club. Some back issues are still available on request.

Editor's note

I should go on holidays more often...My appeal to have material in early for this month's edition, has resulted in a flood of articles. Thank you very much to all contributors. I could not accommodate everybody's contribution but will be able to put the remaining articles in the next edition.
Nomination forms have gone out with this issue. Nominations are due in August in readiness for the September Annual General Meeting. The committee needs new members! There are many vacancies for the executive, committees and sub-committees which need to be filled with eager volunteers. Please consult the inside front page for the types of positions available and consider standing for one of them.. There is also an early reminder for the annual subscription fees. These are due in September.

Spring in the Bendigo Bush
For this year, this program is again coordinated by the Discovery Centre with input from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club and Parks Victoria. If anybody wants to get involved, please contact our club secretary Bill Holsworth (54434063) or the Discovery Centre (54444400)

Sneak Preview of the topic for the July General Meeting

by Ruth Lawrence and Rod Absom

Editor's note: The excerpt below is from a paper published by the above authors on their study of the use of the Slaty Creek underpass by wildlife. Ruth tells me that for the July meeting, she and Rod will cover additional material to what is indicated in this short article. I hope this will all make you want to come on the 14th July and hear about this interesting research. Many of us have driven past the underpass on the way to Melbourne, not knowing it was there or what is happening underneath....

The Slaty Creek wildlife underpass was built by VicRoads in the Black Forest section of the Calder Freeway in 1997 to mitigate the impacts of a new freeway on wildlife passage. This structure was designed primarily to provide access for wildlife moving between the forest block that the freeway bisected but also to allow for creek flows and access for fire fighting crews, maintenance vehicles and pedestrians.
The Slaty Creek underpass is approximately 70 metres wide at the base and supports a split dual carriageway bridge on two 12-metre piers for each section of the carriageway. The distance between the continuous forest patches on either side of the underpass is approximately 100 metres. An important design component of the underpass was the retention of remnant vegetation during the construction of the road and bridges. This enabled some mature eucalypts and middle and understorey vegetation to be retained within the underpass. Further indigenous species were planted after the completion of construction with the intention of recreating a similar vegetation to the adjacent forest.

Vic Roads approached Latrobe University (Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities) because they were interested in the following:

-what fauna species were using the Slaty Creek underpass (and adjacent culverts and roads)?
- are the animals using the underpass during the day or night?
- What use is made of the underpass by potential predators such as domestic and feral animals?
- an assessment of the suitability of the proportions of the underpass for facilitating fauna movement and suggestions for improvement to optimise fauna movement and minimise predation
- requirements of any future monitoring program or further investigation.

Regent Honeyeater Project at Lurg (near Benalla)

by Kerrie Norris

To raise awareness of this project, Ray Thomas will make a slide presentation to the Bendigo Alpine Club
Tuesday 20th July, at the Field Naturalist Clubrooms, approx. 9 pm.
Field Nat. members are welcome to attend.
You may also like to join him for dinner before-hand, 6pm at the Foundry Arms.

Also, through the **Fauna Group,** I am inviting BFNC members to join the Bendigo Alpine Club for a planting weekend on

Sat. 7th - Sun 8th August

The planting weekend includes: A meal and bush-dance together with the other volunteers on the Saturday night, and a BBQ and optional environmental walk on the Sunday afternoon.
Accommodation for visitors: Can be arranged in the Benalla Scout and Guide Halls, with hot showers and minor kitchen facilities, mattresses provided. Or people may choose to tent outside or book a cabin at a caravan park.

See page 10 for details

Contact: **Kerrie Norris Ph. 5447 8017**

June General Meeting
Speaker: Melody Serena - Platypus Conservation and Ecology

by Sabine Wilkens

Melody works for the Australian Platypus Conservancy as a conservation officer...one of those dream jobs...
The night was cold and wet but there were a lot of people there, wanting to hear about this interesting animal. Hearing was quite hard at times, as Melody had to yell over the rain which rattled on the club room roof. I don't think anybody minded....

Unusual characteristics of platypus
Melody first went over some of the unique features. There has been plenty of time to develop these as the platypus ancestors split from the echidna ancestors 60 million years ago. Tom Burton tells me that one fossil platypus tooth was found in South America a few years back. This is interesting, as modern platypus don't have teeth. Since Australia separated from Antarctica 50 mio years ago, it could be that the platypus ancestors were spread across Gondwanaland.

The poison spur
One of the unusual features of this species is the poisonous spur in the male, found on the hind feet. The spur is 15-18 mm long and has the shape of a dog's canine tooth. It contains venom which is produced in a gland in the upper limb. Venom production peaks during the breeding season.
If you pick up a mature male platypus in the breeding season and stroke its belly, the spur response is elicited - the spur being pulled out at right angles to the leg (normally it is held flat against the leg). However, most people, whether it is the breeding season or not – should never pick up any platypus!
Although there are no records of anybody dying from the platypus poison, one can be assured of a great deal of discomfort, or, as Melody put it, excruciating pain, if affected. The limb will swell and become hypersensitive to all other stimuli.
The interesting thing is that morphine is ineffective!
Young male platypus have this spur when they first emerge from their burrows (about February/March) but it is still growing and soft and flexible, surrounded by a sheath, and it does not produce venom until the animals are sexually mature.

The bill
The platypus bill is quite soft and squishy and it incorporates a sixth sense – being able to sense electrical stimuli in the environment. When the platypus dives, it closes its eyes and its ears, so it cannot use sight or sound to find its food. The whole surface of the bill is covered with 1000s of receptors. Some of these receptors sense the movement or flow of water. This helps the animals manoeuvre around obstacles.
Other receptors on the bill pick up electrical currents – they can pick up electrical currents one millionth of the strength humans can detect. Any kind of movement prey animals make involve muscle contractions, and muscle contractions are generating tiny electrical currents. So, if a fresh water shrimp flicks its tail, the current resulting form the muscle movement can be detected by the platypus' bill.

The egg-laying habit of a mammal
Another unusual characteristic of platypus (which are classified as mammals) is that they lay eggs but their young feed on milk like other mammals. The egg is quite small, 15-18 mm long with a parchment-like thin shell. The female incubates the egg in a fold of skin between her stomach and legs. During her incubation period, she only leaves the burrow for very short moments, during which she places the eggs on a nest of wet leaves.
When the young hatch they are naked, about 10 mm long and have the shape of a jelly bean. The mother provides milk from two patches on her skin. She does not have any nipples, but the milk oozes out onto her fur where the young lick it up.

The fur
The platypus fur is another interesting feature – it allows the animal to forage in freezing waters for 12-14 hours. The fur is made up of a double coat. The lower layer is incredibly dense with 500-900 hairs per square millimetre. This number varies with climate. Platypus from Queensland have less than those from Tasmania. The fibres trap air very effectively and thus any cold water does not actually touch the skin of the animal.

Specialised parasites
It seems like the entire biology of this animal is interesting and different. It even has its very own species of tick. Melody showed a slide of a tick-infested platypus. One's first reaction would be to rid this animal, whose conservation we are concerned about, of this

parasite...but as Melody said, if we did that we would cause an animal to become extinct! The ticks do not seem to cause too many problems for the platypus, they are not known to carry a disease or debilitate the animals significantly. They are usually only found around the hind feet because that seems to be the only spot the platypus cannot reach while grooming (with its hind feet).

Platypus conservation

The next section of the talk was concerned with platypus conservation.

Some people believe that seeing a platypus in a waterway is an indicator of the good health of that waterway. The basis for this belief is that platypus need to eat and they need to eat a large amount due to their way of life. A platypus consumes 25-30% of its body weight in food each day and a lactating female up 90% (imagine how many kilos of food we would have to eat if that applied to us). Their diet consists of aquatic invertebrates and thus the number of platypus that a stream can sustain is directly related to the stream's productivity and thus its 'health'.

Looking at it the other way round, what exactly is needed in a waterway to allow platypus to thrive? Melody reported the results of a big habitat study that aimed to answer this question.

One characteristic that showed a strong positive relationship with the occurrence of platypus was the presence of vegetation, preferably many-layered, along the banks of the waterway. The strongest relationship was with trees growing on the side of the waterway. Their litter, when it falls in the water, represents the beginning of the food chain. For this reason, any bank erosion, that threatens those trees has a big (negative) influence on platypus occurrence.

Another important stream characteristic is vegetation cover for the animals and their burrows. Platypus are quite small (2-6kg) and can be taken easily by urban and rural predatory animals.

At Diamond Creek, willows are an acceptable stream vegetation for platypus but only if mixed with other vegetation. Pure stands of willow were avoided, possibly because willow roots require a lot of oxygen which is taken from the water and thus discourages small aquatic invertebrates.

A third important component of platypus habitat are snags and woody debris. These act like pantries for platypus as they concentrate the invertebrates and make foraging more efficient.

Rubbish in the waterway affects platypus badly. Nearly 1/10 of captured animals are debilitated in some way by litter, either by having fishing line wound around or in-grown into their body, or having parts of their body stuck in the plastic rings from glass jar lids (Melody appealed to us to cut any plastic rings when recycling jars and lids...). Left over yabby nets can be death traps for platypus. Such nets are now illegal in streams, but Melody told us about an abandoned net being found in a creek with 17 platypus skulls in it!

If water quality (or quantity) decreases over time, many platypus, the so-called 'dispersers', are mobile enough to be able to move on. However, the presence of many dead platypus recently near remnant ponds means that some are 'stayers' and will die in their home ground if conditions become unsuitable.

A project under way by the platypus conservancy is the mapping of all Victorian sightings. This would create a baseline for any changes in populations.

If you are interested in going platypus spotting, early in the morning or late in the evening are the best times to see them. During the breeding season (around September), due to the high demand on food, females are also frequently seen during the day. They are easily startled by noise or sudden movement.

Information from water ways around Bendigo is quite patchy. **All members are encouraged to report their sightings to the Conservancy** (there is a reporting page on their website) or to **Rod Orr who has agreed to pass any sightings on to Melody.** No platypus have been reported from Bendigo Creek. Now - there is a challenge!

It was a watery topic and turned out to be a watery night! As Rod said at the end, we started the meeting in drought conditions and Melody brought the water with her. Melody was thanked for sharing her passion for these animals by Maurie Lewis (who is also passionate about a group of animals).

Eric Wilkinson's Interglacial Pavement.

Author: Rod Orr

On March 11, 2004 a small group of interested Bendigo Field Naturalists travelled to the parts of Eppalock Reservoir which show the best exposures of Permian Glacial activity in the Bendigo Region. Our Guest Speaker, Carol Hall, had requested such a visit and other members were invited to attend if they were interested - 15 of us made this pilgrimage. Previously, I had asked Eric Wilkinson if he would come with us to show Carol these features and to explain their significance. Eric has a wealth of information about this area and the history of each of the major discoveries of glaciation at Eppalock.

This geological evidence dates from about 200 million years ago when extensive glaciers covered much of southern and central Victoria.

We visited the following Geological features:

1 The Tillite Beach at Derrinal

It's always an amazing experience to walk along this beach observing the diversity of rock types (glacial erratics - rocks of all types and sizes which were transported by the glacier and left behind all mixed up with the ground up remains of erratics and bedrock) collected there.

The photo below shows our group on the beach, the glacial erratics in the foreground with the field naturalists slightly further back

As Noel Schleiger said during our most recent visit during the June long weekend visit to Bendigo by the Geelong Field Naturalist's' Club, "It's a good place to start your rock collection because they've already been collected for you". In wet weather you really do feel as though you are part of a group of eccentrics amongst the erratics. I suppose, however, that most people who walk over this beach in this area would not understand what they were stumbling over unless it was explained to them, and would probably just be annoyed by the uneven, rocky terrrain rather than being amazed by its age and by how it was formed.

The 'rock flour' (produced by the glacier grinding its way over the Ordovician bedrock) is also interesting to walk over, unless it's wet, and then you just collect it unintentionally and take some home on your boots and car mats. When it is recently exposed it is a uniform grey colour which weathers to brown. This fine soil and the assortment of rocks mixed through it which has been left behind by the glaciers is called Tillite.

2 Glacial Pavements

Several good examples of areas of scratched and grooved bedrock are easily seen after a short walk along the high water line of the reservoir (this is an interesting concept now, almost abstract!). These areas of scratched bedrock are glacial pavements which have been ground away by the slowly moving ice and the rocks which are carried along under the glacier as it moves. The bedrock is the familiar Ordovician sandstone bedrock which can be seen exposed over much of the Bendigo region - its age is about 500 million years.

Kellam's Rock: A large section of Glacial Pavement is known as Kellam's Rock. This large exposed area of bedrock has several very clear scratches and some large, deep grooves which show up very well, especially when the rock is wet. This is one of the advantages of visiting the site in wet weather

(the only one?). Kellam's Rock is usually only able to be seen when the lake water level is 'low' and you can walk safely around the waterline to the rock. There has been no difficulty with high water levels for almost a decade, of course, in fact the whole area was so dry that it was very difficult to imagine that this had ever been a water storage.

At Kellam's Rock

Robbins' Rock: Although Frank Robbins discovered many glacial pavements in the Eppalock area, his name is only commemorated by a fairly insignificant rock which is passed unnoticed on the trek between Kellam's rock and Dunn's Rock. These are both much larger and more clearly marked with glacial scratches. Robbins' rock is also normally covered by water whenever Eppalock still has a reasonable amount of stored water.

Dunn's Rock: A large section of this rock had been excavated by Frank Robbins and associates to demonstrate that the scratches extended below the present soil level and to show that they were glacial in origin and not caused by minor faulting and fracturing of the rock, which had been suggested by other geologists. Dunn's Rock is well above the highest water level of the reservoir and appears to be separate although these pavements are all part of the same Ordovician sandstone bedrock *(see photo on page 8)*. The exposed sections were buried again but the outline of the excavation can still be seen.

3 Interglacial Pavements at Moorabbee Bluff *(see front cover photo)*

The first of these (the upper pavement) was noticed during a Monash University geology excursion when the water level was below full supply level. It was interesting to hear from Eric that this upper interglacial pavement was known by its discoverer's name but that the lower pavement, which had been under water when the upper one had been noticed, remained unnamed. We asked who had discovered the lower pavement - Eric himself, had found this lower interglacial pavement when the water level was much lower, but, although he had described and photographed it, his name had never been attached to this pavement.

Of course we decided to redress this injustice and photographed Eric in possession of his Interglacial Pavement, which we named 'Wilkinson's Interglacial Pavement'. *The photo shows Eric standing on the pavement, indicating the glacial striae (scratches).*

I undertook the task of finding out whether we could make this 'official' and how to achieve this. When I asked Neville Rosengren how geological features were named, I was disappointed to learn that the officially recognised names generally refer to a geographic feature or location. These features which show evidence of Permian glaciation in the Derrinal and Moorabbee areas should thus be officially referred to by the names of these locations rather than by the names of people who had discovered them, so Dunn's Rock and Kellam's Rock have more the spirit of locally recognised names rather than officially recognised names of these geological features.
I am still convinced that we need to recognise Eric's discovery of this Interglacial Pavement by using his name in association with it, announcing this by publication in *Whirrakee*, and by encouraging all Field Naturalists to refer to this Interglacial Pavement 'properly'.

Wilkinson's Interglacial Pavement has very clear glacial striae and several interesting glacial erratics embedded in its surface. The photograph shows something of its size but do not really show how its surface actually slopes down towards where the water should be in Eppalock Reservoir. The dry bed of the reservoir is now more than 20 metres below the level of these interglacial pavements. It's hard enough to get up or down the face of the bluff and stand on either of the pavements when conditions are dry but it's very difficult when it's raining and the soil and rocks on the steep slopes are slippery - its slope adds to the hazard.

The dry bed of Eppalock Reservoir was being grazed by cattle when we visited this area with Carol Hall in March. Let's hope that it fills rapidly so that the cow manure is well and truly diluted before Bendigo begins to sample the delights of Eppalock water as a component of our drinking water supply.

These are sites of considerable significance, and not only because names of several former members of our Club are closely associated with the discovery and study of these glacial remnants. Eric considers them to be at least of National significance.
When the Geelong Field Naturalists were told of this during our most recent visit on the June long weekend, it was suggested that a useful action by the South Eastern Association of Naturalists Associations (SEANA) could be to ensure that the significance of the area was properly recognised. This is always a double-edged sword isn't it? It would be terrible if any of these features suffered damage from vandalism or became degraded by overuse if they became better known, but it would be just as bad if, through ignorance of the area's geological significance, someone decided to use a bulldozer to remove large amounts of Tillite or bedrock for building material or for their own rock collection, or an Erratic Rockery!
The thoroughly enlightened group of Field Naturalists thanked Eric for showing us these features of our district and for his explanation of their history and significance. We all had a very pleasant and interesting day.

Dunn's Rock and admirers

A response to Clive Fisher's Jackass Flat letter to the *Advertiser*

by Clive Fisher

My letter that was printed in the Bendigo *Advertiser* and the May edition of *Whirrakee* concerning the burning of the Jackass Flat Flora Reserve has been answered in a letter from Bruce Furnell which was printed in the Bendigo *Advertiser* of May 22nd.

Mr. Furnell made several points:

1. He thought it was an excellent fuel reduction burn,
2. Fuel reduction burns are totally supported by Mr. Furnell and his neighbours who live adjacent to the Reserve,
3. Mr Wagstaff complied with his permit conditions,
4. The damage in the Reserve is insignificant compared to an uncontrollable wild fire, which these burns are designed to prevent,
5. He and his neighbours have requested Mr. Wagstaff to burn the far northern section of the Reserve.

I agree that it reduced fuel very considerably, but to an extent which I believe is fine for forests, but definitely an overkill for an exceptional flora reserve like Jackass Flat.

Proof that it is exceptional can be found on page five of the publication "Wildflowers of Bendigo", compiled by the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club Inc., where it is stated, among other things, that species that grow in the Whipstick reach their southernmost point here.

I believe that the damage is as bad as that which an uncontrollable wild fire would wreak. Admittedly, the whole of the Reserve was not burnt, But Mr. Furness and his neighbours want other sections burnt as well, as stated in his letter.

Plea for help finding Noisy Miner free remnants

Hi There,
My name is Jo Oldland. I'm a research assistant working within Assoc. Prof. Mike Clarke's 'Ornithology and Avian Conservation' group at La Trobe University. We are in the early stages of a three year project aiming to find a sustainable means of limiting the negative impact of domination of remnant native and planted woodland by the hyper-aggressive Noisy Miner.

One aspect of the study involves looking at how woodland remnants that are NOT dominated by Noisy Miners differ from those that are. Part of the study involves finding small woodland remnants (< 20 ha in area) that are free of Noisy Miners (or at least not dominated by them) within the range of the Noisy Miner within Victoria and NSW.

We would like to enlist the help of fellow ornithologists and bird watchers throughout Victoria and NSW to locate these remnants. So far the task is proving to be quite difficult, as these remnants are few and far between, and also likely to be located on private property.

Of particular interest to the study are remnants occurring within Box-Ironbark Forests; Riverine Grassy Woodlands; the Gippsland Plains Grassy Woodlands and the 'Box-Buloke' Plains Grassy Woodlands of Western Victoria.
Having said this, we would also be interested to learn of ANY Noisy Miner-free remnants within Victoria and NSW.

The remnants must be 'discreet areas', at least 50 m from other vegetated areas, although if connected remnants (via vegetation corridors etc.), free of Noisy Miners exist, we would be eager to learn of them too.

An additional requirement is that the overstorey must consist, at least partially, of eucalypt species.

We would really appreciate it if you could circulate this information to members within your organisation (or anywhere else deemed appropriate, for that matter!).

My contact details are: Jo Oldland
Department of Zoology La Trobe University
BUNDOORA VIC 3086
Ph: (03) 9479 1672
Mob: 0427 349 697
email: J.Oldland@latrobe.edu.au

With Thanks,
Jo Oldland.

Regent Honeyeater Project at Lurg

Planting season 2004

I am writing to invite you to participate in an outstanding conservation project in the Lurg Hills near Benalla. This well established revegetation project focuses on the **Regent Honeyeater**, an endangered bird species which has declined seriously over recent decades. Only about 1000 - 1500 of these striking birds remain in the wild and there are just 3 key habitats left in Victoria! The Lurg district, as one of these, provides essential nectar supplies for Regent Honeyeaters when they arrive each winter to feed on the flowering Ironbarks.

But the ecosystem is in trouble! After 150 years of clearing and grazing, remnants of the former Mugga Ironbark forest are scattered across the landscape as narrow strips on roadsides and small patches on private land. With increasing fragmentation and grazing pressure, the natural ecological balances of healthy bushland have been lost. Remnants have little or no understorey, serious dieback problems are obvious throughout the district, mistletoe is out of control in many areas and the paddock trees are dying. We are losing the valuable old habitat at an alarming rate and it's a one way process!!

So there is a race against the clock to protect, restore and enlarge the existing habitat as fast as possible. The system is so depleted we have 10 threatened species in this one small farming district! As well as the Regents, we have Grey Crowned Babblers, Bush Stone Curlews, Squirrel Gliders, Brush Tailed Phascogales, Quolls and many rare plants, all hanging on by their skin of their teeth.

The project has gained enormous support from the local landholders who are keen to protect any habitat that remains. 85 landholders, 18 schools, 2 LEAP groups, 4 *Green Corps* teams, Work For The Dole groups, and literally thousands of volunteers from tertiary institutions, bushwalking clubs, cycling clubs, church congregations, scout groups and local businesses have all lent a hand in the work so far.

Activities such as seed collection, plant propagation, fencing, planting, direct seeding, mistletoe removal, environmental weeding, nest box placement, and Babbler monitoring have been in full swing for the past 9 years. The staggering results include planting over 200,000 indigenous plants and restoring well over 700 hectares of habitat.

The project invites visitors to come and share working weekends with local landholders and project co-ordinator Ray Thomas. People see the best and the worst of this farming district, understand why these species are in trouble and see for themselves the fantastic results from previous years' efforts. They also get right into the action with mass tree planting, nest box monitoring, plant propagation, and seed collection or cleaning.

Around 1000 local students take part in the action each year as well, with major inputs to growing and planting the 30,000 odd seedlings we need.

Perhaps you'd like to spend a weekend up at Lurg enjoying some new countryside and getting inspired by the results of the past 9 years? It's a great opportunity to meet new people and have some fun while doing something concrete for our environment.
Accommodation for visitors can be arranged in the Benalla Scout and Guide Halls, with hot showers, minor kitchen facilities and mattresses all provided. Planting weekends include a meal together and bush dance on the Saturday night, with a BBQ and optional wildflower walk on Sunday afternoon.

To help raise awareness, I would be pleased to make a slide presentation to your group, outlining the conservation issues and what we have achieved to date. I look forward to hearing from you.

Ray Thomas Regent Honeyeater Project
ph (03) 57 611 515 work **email** raydavidthomas@hotmail.com

The General, Bird Observers Group and Fauna Study Group meetings are held at the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

General Meetings

Wednesday, July 14 7.30pm
Rod Absom & Ruth Lawrence: 'The Slaty Creek Project (Calder Hwy)'
see page 3 for a preview of this talk.

Bird Observers Group Excursions

Sun 3rd October
WHIPSTICK/KAMAROOKA AREA

Meet 8.30 Cnr. Napier St (Midland Hwy) and Howard St (Northern side) Epsom.
Contact- Pam + John Land, ph. 5436 1511

Note: The Whipstick- Kamarooka area is noted for the number and diversity of bird species which might be recorded at any time of year. This most southern patch of mallee forest provides the overlap between the extent of range that many northern and or southern species of birds may venture.
On a good morning (winter) it is not uncommon to record up to 50 species of birds, including at least 13 different species of honeyeaters.

Bring: Suitable clothing and footwear for weather conditions, morning tea drink and snack, lunch optional.
Car-pooling: Can be organized at the meeting point
Beginners to birding most welcome.

Fauna Group
This group meets (in the clubrooms) on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm.

Wednesday, July 28 7.30pm
Topic for discussion to be advised.

In conjunction with the Bendigo Alpine Club, members of BFN are invited to attend Regent Honeyeater Project at Lurg, Planting Weekend Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th August. Contact Kerrie Norris Ph. 54478017

BFNC Garden Working Bee

This year we need regular garden working bees and they are usually held on the Saturday before each general meeting, at 9am. With the recent rains maintenance requirements have increased and weeds will start to grow despite the cold. Therefore:

The next working bee will be on
Saturday 10th July, 9am

All welcome

Bendigo Wildflower Show

This is just a preliminary announcement that the Wildflower Show this year, as part of the 'Spring in the Bendigo Bush' will go ahead on September 18/19. It is jointly organised by the Society for Growing Native Plants and the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club. Could people who are interested in being involved in this please contact Bill Holsworth on 54434063.

Kangaroo Gully Reserve
As mentioned in the June *Whirrakee*, a planting day has been organised for the Reserve.
This is to take place on

Sunday 15th August

For further information contact:
Jeremy Tscharke, Parks Victoria (5430 4663)
Marg Allan (54470612)
Kerrie Norris (54478017)